

William (Liam) Skinner

75 Westchester St, Lowell, MA. 01851 ♦ 978-935-8910 ♦ lskinner@lowell.k12.ma.us

EDUCATION

University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
BA, Mathematics and Geography, 1987

University College Cork, Cork, Ireland
Ed. H. Dip., Mathematics Instruction, 1988

Boston College, Lynch School of Education, Chestnut Hill, MA
Ed.M., School Administration, 1994

National Institute for School Leadership
Certificate of successful completion, 2008

Extensive post-MA coursework

Including:

- Instructional Leadership & School Reform (UML)
- Law, Ethics and Policies for the Educator (Fitchburg State University)
- Leadership for Honest Open Communications (RBT/FSU)
- Leadership in a Standards-Based Educational System (DoE/ Endicott College)
- Analyzing Teaching for Student Results (RBT/FSU)
- Data-Informed Decision Making for School Improvement & Student Learning (LPS/FSU)

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Chief Schools Officer (Asst. Supt.), Lowell Public Schools

Lowell Public Schools (2021-present)

- Led intensive renewal of instructional leadership focus, incorporating professional development for school leaders, as well as individual coaching and supervision in every school
- Led the expansion and enhancement of Lowell's use of Instructional Rounds to include all schools in a model of collaborative learning and growth
- Developed a far-ranging partnership with UMass Lowell to foster a culture of continuous quality improvement that urgently addresses long-standing inequities
- Implemented the district's vision for data visualization through the introduction of two data dashboards and developing systems for schools' use of data to serve as a tool for goal-setting and progress monitoring.
- Provided detailed and timely responses to School Committee motions and requests for information
- Provided detailed, thorough evaluations for all principals, with balanced commentary including feedback for growth in each evaluation report

- Led the development of the district's Office of Performance Management to increase efficiency, accuracy, and transparency, as well as provide enhanced support to schools
- Revised and strengthened the school improvement planning processes, including through reinforced guardrails, enhanced use of data, and more intensive focus on equity.

Principal, James S. Daley Middle School

Lowell Public Schools (1999-2021)

- Led extensive turnaround effort involving, among many other features, establishing a shared school vision, recruitment and hiring, establishing new professional norms, and repurposing meeting times.
- Developed a culture of high expectations for all staff and students
- Initiated a Professional Learning Community model for all study groups
- Provided for high quality professional development for staff
- Put in place Safety Net programs for struggling students

Co-Leader, School Leadership Institute

University of Massachusetts at Lowell (2013-2019)

Along with professor Stacy Szczesiul of UMass Lowell, designed and implemented a program to build principal leadership knowledge and skills. At the program meetings, presented and mentored on a range of topics.

Member, Joint Committee on Educator Evaluation

Lowell Public Schools (2013-2015)

Worked with representatives of central administration and UTL to implement the Educator Evaluation System in Lowell Public Schools

Co-Instructor, Administrative Internship Program

Lowell Public Schools (2006-2008)

Along with one other Lowell principal, co-led a monthly Administrative Intern Seminar during the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years. The seminar developed the skills and knowledge of a cohort of aspiring elementary, middle and high school administrators in Lowell.

CERTIFICATION

Massachusetts Professional Licensure [#316412]

Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent, All Levels

75 Westchester St.,
Lowell, MA 01851

May 22, 2023

To Whom It May Concern,

Please accept my application to be Lowell's interim Superintendent of Schools for the 2023 - 2024 school year. By knowledge and experience, by character and temperament, I believe I am uniquely well suited for the role. An immigrant from Ireland, my entire 35-year career has been spent working in Lowell while living in the heart of the community. This city has offered me opportunity and professional fulfillment, and in return, as a teacher, principal, and currently Chief Schools Officer, I've been privileged to devote myself to its youngsters and families.

My service to the LPS community exemplifies the very qualities the School Committee has indicated it seeks in an interim superintendent. I offer stability epitomized by my 22-year tenure as principal of the Daley school, and facilitated by my deep knowledge of both our schools and central office functions. I will establish a respectful, transparent, and accountable culture in our district, much as I have done through all of my career. The respectful, inclusive, nurturing culture recognized by students, staff and families at Daley school was also recognized and studied by the Department of Education. This culture did not materialize by chance. It was the result of intentional actions to forge such a culture, including by making equity central to all decisions and by my consistent modeling of the values and dispositions I've sought to cultivate in others. My career to date is a testament to the vibrant, thriving culture my respectful, consultative leadership will establish in our central office and throughout the district.

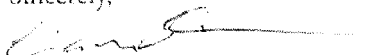
As Chief Schools Officer, I have set in motion plans that I believe, on their own, will lead to significant improvement in outcomes for students in coming years. I have, for instance, led a renewed focus on instructional leadership in our schools. This work began with professional development training I designed and delivered to all Lowell principals and assistant principals. Crucially, and for the first time, the elements of this professional development were accompanied by leadership coaching and direct supervision I provided through individual school visits. More recently, working in conjunction with DESE officials, UML partners, and school principals, I have expanded these professional development offerings for leaders. This has included an enhanced and expanded use of the Instructional Rounds model as a school improvement strategy. I collaborated with curriculum office staff to increase our monitoring and calibration of improvement efforts in all schools, and welcomed additional partners such as equity office staff and DESE representatives to join our school visits.

Throughout my career in Lowell I've enjoyed, and benefited from, countless partnerships with our local university. As Chief Schools Officer, I immediately began collaborating with university staff to foster a culture of continuous quality improvement that would urgently address long-standing inequities in educational experiences and outcomes in our schools. Last spring that work was formalized in a Research Practice Partnership centered around building a system of data-informed learning in LPS. This extensive partnership began with the development of a data dashboard representing a shared set of standards for school quality and which serves as a tool for goal-setting, progress monitoring, and data visualization. It continues with a goal to develop a district-wide learning system - tools, protocols, and organizational learning processes - that builds the capacity of LPS personnel to couple the dashboard with methods of continuous quality improvement.

I am intimately familiar with LPS's Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025. I share the core beliefs and fundamental commitments it's based on and, as a member of the superintendent's cabinet, I have seized opportunities to affect its implementation in various ways. The plan's fundamental commitment to equity, for example, is woven explicitly into each of the initiatives I've led. Critically, this includes each of the professional development offerings for leaders. It also includes the RPP with UML where the first feature of the data dashboard we built was to disaggregate data, from all sources, and in every analysis of that data to identify disproportionalities. In my close work with Lowell High School leaders I've supported their work on developing the Portrait of a Graduate initiative and on aligning curriculum and programs with post-secondary opportunities so that students are college, career, and life ready upon graduation.

My work has enabled me to gain a deep knowledge of each of our schools, to understand their needs, and form close working relationships with each of their leaders. As a former, long-standing principal of a highly successful middle school, I enjoy respectful, collaborative relationships with all school leaders. As an avid student of research and as a practitioner who specializes in skillful use of best practices, I know what is needed and have repeatedly shown I can bring about positive change in both practices and culture. Through 35 years of successful work in Lowell I have also built strong relationships throughout the district and in the community. I model the dispositions and values I expect in others, which include respectful interactions, smart, collaborative decision-making, and efficient hard work. Uniquely able to work across all departments and schools, I believe I'm a leader who takes responsibility, brings people together and effects positive change. I am excited to devote myself to the role of interim superintendent. I look forward to engaging in the interview process.

Sincerely,



Liam Skinner

9 Stephen Place
Newton, MA 02461

May 4, 2023

To Whom it May Concern,

Liam Skinner is applying for the position of Interim Superintendent of Schools for the Lowell Public Schools. He has my strongest possible recommendation. I have come to regard Liam as one of the finest educators and leaders I have had the privilege of working with in my nearly fifty-year career in public education in Massachusetts.

Liam and I first met in 2000 when I became Superintendent of Schools in Lowell and he was starting his second year as Principal of the Daley Middle School. We were colleagues until my departure in 2008. For each of those eight years, he was a professional I could always count on to act in the best interests of students, work very hard, hold and uphold high standards for himself and others, and speak truth with both candor and compassion.

Twice during my time in Lowell I recruited Liam to consider applying for major administrative positions that I anticipated opening. Each time he turned me down, seeking instead to “finish the work” he had begun at the Daley. I admired his loyalty and commitment – and his understanding that deep change takes time. But I was disappointed: the larger district would miss the full impact of this man’s gifts! So, I was delighted to learn two years ago that Liam felt ready to leave the Daley and take on the central office role of Chief of Schools. I have no doubt that he is making a most positive mark on all the schools now!

One key to Liam’s effectiveness is that he has always paid very close attention to school culture. It came as no surprise when former colleagues at DESE told me a few years ago that statewide student climate survey it administers to a large majority of all of the Commonwealth’s 5th and 8th grade students had turned up extremely positive results for the Daley: its “positive deviance” caught the Department’s attention and led staff there to want to explore just what it was that made the Daley’s culture so strong and healthy.

A second key to Liam’s effectiveness has been his laser-like focus on instruction and willingness to take all steps necessary – up to and including teacher dismissal – to ensure that teachers (and now principals) grow their pedagogical expertise. He was in classrooms all the time; when I visited classrooms with him I was always impressed by his knowledge of his teacher’s strengths and growing edges and the clarity and specificity of the improvement goals he expected them to achieve. And this was all before new state regulations in 2011 were established to make that kind of focus the norm for all principals’ practice as instructional leaders.

There are other keys to Liam's effectiveness that make him such a very strong candidate for Interim Superintendent in Lowell, among them:

- Liam is a learner: his genuine curiosity and his rigorous and analytical mind make him a thoughtful "student" of what works and what doesn't in schools, what holds promise and what doesn't. His doctoral studies at UMass Lowell, I'm sure, have only sharpened his knowledge and thirst for learning.
- Liam is an effective coach: it was Liam I turned to when I needed a strong principal to take the lead in developing the content for a principal intern program; and it was Liam who was the first person I asked when I needed an effective leader to take new principals under his wing. I knew he would also model integrity and unselfishness, not just expertise. His earnest questioning and enthusiastic listening have and will earn educators' trust; with their trust earned, his perceptive observations and capacity to get to the heart of issues will prompt them to act – to embrace the challenges, take the risks and make the changes needed to make themselves more effective leaders.
- Liam has a prodigious capacity for work: he is focused, persistent and relentless; I could always count on Liam to get any job done – and done well.
- I'm confident that Lowell teachers, administrators and families continue to respect Liam. They will listen to him, learn with him, and embrace his high expectations for delivering first-rate teaching to every child, every day.

Liam Skinner is a loyal, seasoned, respected professional with enormous capacity to take on the role of superintendent in Lowell during this critical and challenging time. With two years as Chief of Schools now under his belt, he has had a close up view of what the superintendency requires. He has learned what each school – and its leader - needs to be doing to achieve excellence for its students. He has gained critical knowledge of the nuances of what administrators in other district leadership roles – business, finance, human resources, student services, curriculum and instruction - need to be doing to help make Lowell schools stronger. I cannot imagine a better, more prepared candidate for the position of Interim Superintendent of the Lowell Public Schools.

If I can provide any additional information that might be helpful to you as you weigh the choices in front of you, please do not hesitate to contact me at [REDACTED] or karlabrooksbaehr@gmail.com

Yours truly,

Karla Brooks Baehr

Karla Brooks Baehr
Deputy Commissioner (retired)



COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, HUMANITIES, & SOCIAL SCIENCES

May 1, 2023

Dr. James Hall
155 Merrimack Street 4th floor
Lowell, Massachusetts 01862

Dear Dr. Hall:

It is my distinct pleasure to write in support of Liam Skinner's application for the position of Interim Superintendent of the Lowell Public School system. A little over ten years ago, I began working with Liam to design and deliver a multi-district collaboration between the UML College of Education and the Lowell, Woburn, Billerica, Chelmsford, and Methuen Public Schools. With grant funding we designed the School Leadership Institute (SLI) to build principal leadership capacity within school districts through highly-relevant/context-specific professional development that is embedded in a collegial, constructively critical community of practice. Each year since, the Institute has focused on developing skills related to critical aspects of school leadership, such as collecting and analyzing data from classroom observations in order to effectively implement the state's educator evaluation system, while also consistently emphasizing the development of intra and interpersonal skills that administrators need to effectively negotiate the social side of their organizations.

I sought out Liam as a member of the grant-funded leadership team because of his demonstrated capacity to lead an urban school well and, given his depth of experience and his sustained success as an administrator, he was already mentoring less experienced and less skilled colleagues in his district. Put simply, Liam brought (and continues to bring) a necessary level of professional and practical knowledge and skill that lends "street" credibility to the Institute and that, in turn, makes the work we do directly applicable and valuable to our participating administrators. Whether it's the teaching cases, role plays, and simulations we develop or the questions we anchor our discussions in, Liam's lived experiences as a veteran principal make the opportunities for professional learning authentic. For many of our participants, the work that happens in SLI is the only opportunity they have for professional learning and collaboration and they seek out Liam's perspective during and outside of our sessions. He has become a trusted and reliable source of support and mentorship for them. Liam has become an important source of professional collegiality for me, as well. The work of the Institute gets done through sustained collaboration among colleagues who are willing to push and be pushed by each other. Liam and I have worked with three other expert principals to refine the professional development offered through the Institute. (Notably, our first partner was Robin Desmond, who left the Institute to take the assistant superintendent role in Lowell Public Schools in our second year.) His collaborative stance is defined by a healthy critical lens and an orientation toward learning—his own and that of everyone he works with.

I could talk at great length about Liam as a colleague, but I want to share my perspective as a member of his school community because I think it—perhaps as much as any other perspective—underscores the importance of having him as a leader of leaders in the Lowell Public Schools. My husband and I were Daley School parents for eleven years. Our three kids moved successfully and contentedly through grades 5-8 and arrived at Lowell High ready for the challenges of freshman year. I want to take a minute to comment on how Liam's leadership directly shaped the experiences of our youngest child, who graduated from the Daley two years ago. During the fall of his seventh grade year, August (Gus) came out to us as transgender and he socially transitioned at school the following spring. As you know, many things can go wrong—many transgender kids are only further alienated when they choose to live their truth in schools.

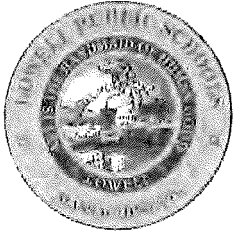
Gus is one of the lucky kids. He experienced nothing but love and support from every member of the Daley school community—from the social worker who went beyond advocating for him to the coaches, teachers, and students who did nothing but encourage him to be himself. The Daley School is a model for inclusion, particularly for LGBTQ youth. School culture like that does not happen on its own; I credit it to leadership—Liam's leadership. Kids shouldn't have to be lucky; they should be guaranteed that their schools are led by administrators, like Liam, who model and inspire others to be guided by cultural expectations that confirm that their lives matter.

If you have any questions about Liam's capacity for leadership in the role of CSO, I'd be happy to speak more on his behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacy Agee' followed by a stylized flourish.

Stacy Agee Szczesiul
Associate Dean of Online Education, Accreditation, & Licensing
University of Massachusetts Lowell
Stacy_szczesiul@uml.edu



Lowell Public Schools
J.G. Pyne Arts Magnet School
145 Boylston Street
Lowell, MA 01852



Wendy Crocker-Roberge
Principal
Lori A. Lang
Assistant Principal

Tel: 978-937-7639
Fax: 978-446-0942

May 3, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

It is my privilege to write on behalf of one of the most well-respected educational leaders in the region, Liam Skinner, in support for his candidacy as the next Superintendent of the Lowell Public Schools. His impeccable record of service to the students, families, and staff of the Lowell Public Schools for more than two decades speaks volumes about the quality of work he will bring to this role.

I have been acquainted with Mr. Skinner for the last ten years after joining the Lowell Public Schools in 2011 as a principal. Liam was one of the first members of the principal group to strike up a friendly conversation and formally welcome me to their ranks. Early in my tenure, I quickly learned that in our peer group, Liam's words and wisdom were shared sparingly and truly when there was something of significance to contribute. As a result, when Liam speaks, people listen. I find him to be precise and impeccable with his words, which is far more the exception than the norm. He is a leader who truly knows how to listen- a skill he has honed over time. As a leader, he is one of the most skillful I have met who can quietly command a room and leave a lasting impression.

In our many conversations about teaching, learning, and leadership, I have found Liam and I are extremely well aligned in our ideologies and practices. The through line in everything is setting and maintaining high standards for excellence for oneself, for our staff members, and for our students. If you visit the Daley Middle School, where Liam served as principal for twenty-two years, these expectations are still readily palpable when you walk through the doors. He created an academic environment where students thrive and set the gold standard for a safe, orderly, and welcoming school.

One of the greatest testaments to a leader's capacity to lead is how well the organization sustains its practices after the leader's departure. Despite a global pandemic, the Daley Middle School continues to top the district in almost every indicator we measure for student success. Liam created a succession team that was well-equipped to maintain a high level of performance and continue to grow in new ways.

During my time in Lowell, I have served alongside Liam on a number of different district-based committees, from the Joint Committee on Educator Evaluation from 2013-2015 to the School Reopening Task Force this past summer in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Well before becoming the Chief Schools Officer, Liam was engaged in conducting instructional rounds and learning walks in several of the turnaround schools in Lowell and sharing best practices on a variety of school improvement efforts during monthly district leadership meetings. He mentored several new school leaders, both in formal and informal arrangements, and was always a trusted source of a well-informed opinion when a leader is seeking consultation about a problem of practice.

Liam's longevity as a school principal at the same school for over two decades is a real testament to his commitment to continuous growth and improvement. The most difficult times in school leadership don't come in the first few years at

a school. It is actually a much easier feat to enter a new school and make broad and sweeping quick changes in the name of turnaround and school improvement. Most people move on before the work gets really hard. The difficult tasks come when you have endured the ebbs and flows of times of fiscal prosperity and hardship, when you have found ways to successfully nurture teachers' growth and development over time, and when you have hired well and counseled others out of teaching for the benefit of your students. Liam has done all of this and more.

As the Chief Schools Officer of the Lowell Public Schools for the past two years, Liam has brought a high level of professionalism and a principal's perspective to the role. He conducts himself in a manner that exudes excellence and inspires it in others around him. Anything he will ask of a school leader is something he is willing and able to model at the ready. He has worked throughout the entirety of the PreK-12 system to support continuous improvement, pandemic learning recovery efforts, safe learning environments, building and district leadership development, and family and community engagement.

Liam is not loud or flashy about his efforts. He is a tireless, focused workhorse who listens, is responsive to concerns, and who is able to bring various stakeholders together across sometimes deep divides in order to achieve a positive outcome. Outside of the inner workings of the district, you will not see him tooting his own horn or social media or usurping attention from others to advance his own status. Do not underestimate his impact based on a lack of self-promotion. His leadership style is a refreshing return to actions and results over promises and platitudes.

In the Greater Lowell community, Liam Skinner is a name that brings true credibility to our school district. As a member of the Executive Cabinet, the perspectives he brings from the school and district levels will be invaluable with helping leaders, the School Committee, and parents and families steer the course for rebuilding post-pandemic and achieving the goal of being the greatest urban district in the Commonwealth. It is with great confidence that I offer my support to Liam Skinner as the next Superintendent of Schools.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wendy L. Crocker-Roberge". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end.

Wendy L. Crocker-Roberge, M. Ed